Skilled Group Leader: Tools for Advisory Council Members

What is a facilitator?

- A facilitator is a person responsible for structuring groups and group activities in a manner that supports and encourages the participation of all members and allows the group to attain its goals and objectives.

Note: In Advisory Councils this role is usually assumed by the leader.

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Characteristics of an Effective Facilitator/Group Leader:

○ Creates a positive environment

○ Solicits participation from all members

○ Values contributions of each member

○ Varies techniques for group decision-making

○ Skilled in asking questions

Characteristics of an Effective Facilitator/Group Leader:

- Captures contributions of each member
- Skilled in writing on flip charts
- Uses body language effectively
- Manages structure – not content
- Helps groups work through conflict

Structure = *"How"* The Process Works

○ *"How"* **Includes:**

- Supplies
- Agenda
- Meeting Environment
- Process

Content = *"What"* is shared

○ Comes from participants
- Agreed upon objectives
- Problems identifies
- Personal experiences
- Data and ideas

Elements for *"Setting the Stage"*

- Room arrangements
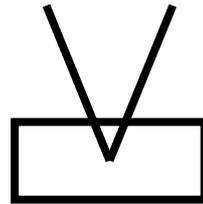- Meeting Room Environment
- Good Beginnings

Room Arrangements

- Determined by
  - Size of group
  - Size of meeting room
  - Purpose of meeting
- Should be intentionally planned and arranged
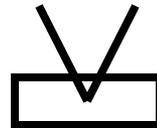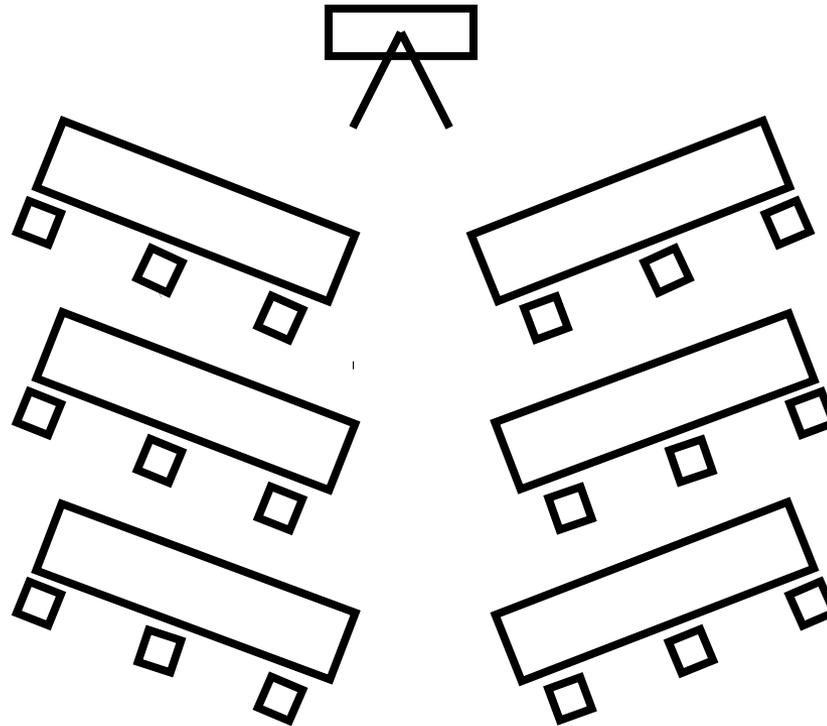- Should be varied from meeting to meeting

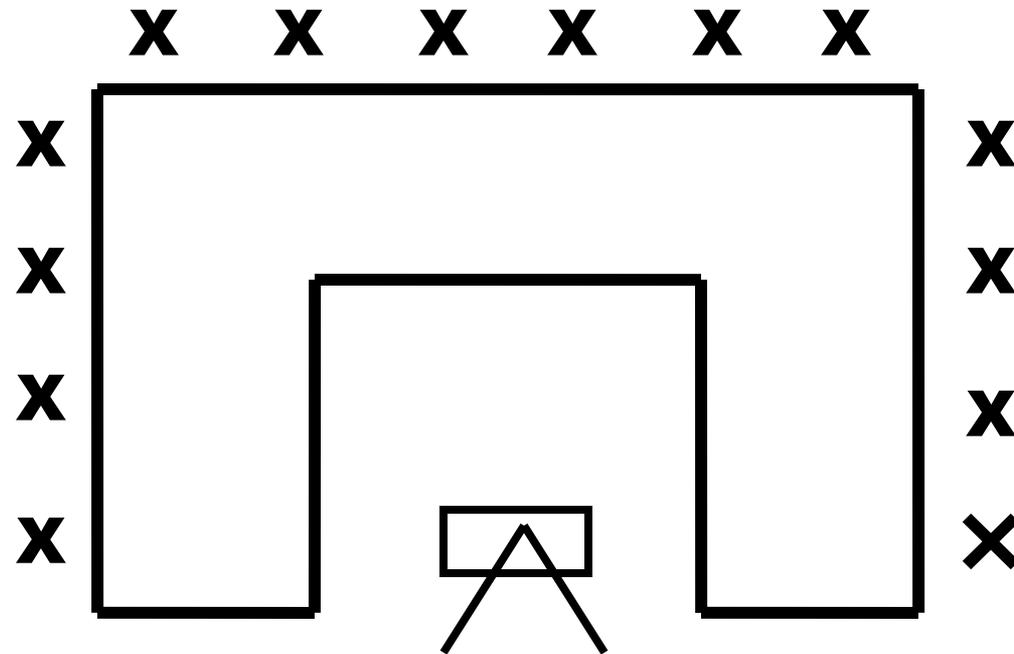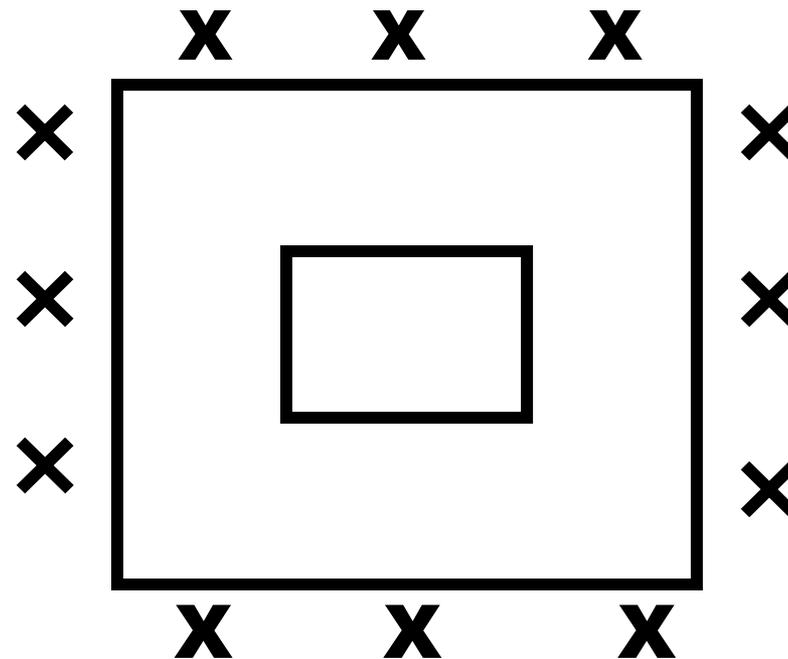# Theater Style

Classroom Style
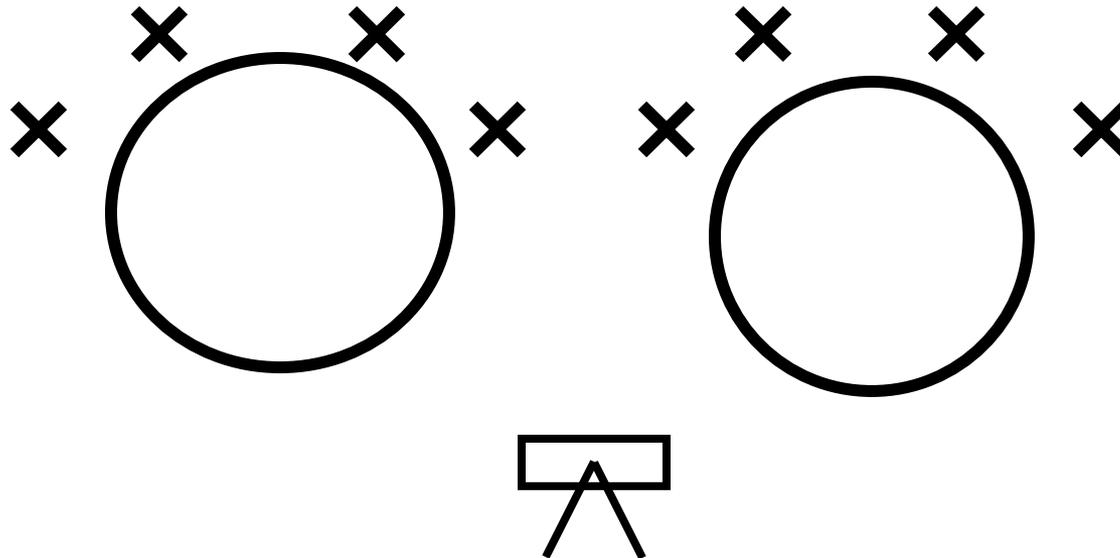
Chevron

U-Shaped

Hollow-Square/Solid Square

Half-Circle

Meeting Room Environment

- Windows
- Temperature
- Atmosphere
- Food and Beverages

Good Beginnings

- Name Tags
- Name Tents
- Introductions/Get Acquainted

Asking Non-Threatening Questions

- Announce questions to entire group
- Pause
- Write the question
- Acknowledge contributions
- Encourage Responses

Asking Non-Threatening Questions (cont.)

- During silence look for non-verbal cues indicating ideas
- Rephrase the question
- Avoid "yes" or "no" questions
- Avoid creating defensive responses
- Ask "single issues" questions

Paraphrasing:

❖ *"It sounds like you're saying..."*

❖ *"I hear you saying...,"*

❖ *"Let me see if I understand you…"*

Explore Further

- ❖ *"I understand so far, now tell me more."*

- ❖ *"I hear you saying…, now can you tell me more?"*

- ❖ *"What do you mean by…?"*

- ❖ *" How so?" "You said…, because…?"*

Mirroring:

❖ **Speaker: "*I like giving two book awards.*"**

❖ **Facilitator: "*You like giving two book awards.*"**

Stacking:

❖ *"Bill you are first, Nancy second, Tom you're third…":*

Encouraging

❖ *"Who else has an idea?*
❖ *"Is there a student's perspective on this topic?"*
❖ *"The women (men) have been quiet. Do you have any comments?"*
❖ *"What was said at table two?"*
❖ *"Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken for awhile."*

Balancing

❖ *"Okay, now we know their position, does anyone have a different position?"*

❖ *"Are there other positions?"*

❖ *"What does someone else think?"*

❖ *"Is there another way to look at this?"*

Making Space

❖ *"Would you like to speak to this?"*

❖ *"What are your ideas?"*

❖ *"Did you want to add anything?"*

❖ *"You looked like you wanted to say something."*

Intentional Silence

❖

Listen for Common Ground

❖ "We agree on these points. . . and disagree on these. . . "

Techniques For Setting Priorities

- 100 Votes
- Multivoting
- Nominal Group Technique

Brainstorming

- Open-ended question
- Do not make judgments about ideas
- List all ideas on a flip chart sheet
- Encourage hitchhiking
- Focus on quantity
- Stay loose
- The best comes last

100 Votes

○ Brainstorm a list of options

○ Review the list – clarify, merge ideas

○ Participants cast 100 votes each

- Vote for any number of items
- Votes cast total 100 for each person

○ Total votes for each item

○ Review votes

○ Identify top priority items

Multivoting

- Brainstorm a list of options
- Review the list – clarify, merge ideas
- Participants vote for ideas worthy of further discussion
- Identify items for next round of voting
- Vote again
- Repeat steps 4 and 5
- Discuss remaining ideas
- Proceed with appropriate action

Nominal Group Technique

- Silently brainstorm ideas
- Share ideas-round-robin fashion and record on flip chart
- Discuss and clarify all ideas
- Each person ranks their top ten ideas
- Average the rank for each item

Nominal Group Technique (cont.)

- Discuss ranked items
- From items ranked the first time, each participant ranks their top five items
- 2nd Rankings are averaged
- Final rankings are discussed.